



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

## SOME DAKOTA MYTHS. I.

THE following myths were collected several years ago, while the writer was on an expedition for the American Museum of Natural History. They were all recorded at Pine Ridge, S. Dak., and narrated by two Ogalala men each about fifty years of age. As no extensive collection of Teton myths has been published, it seems worth while giving this small collection as a contribution to the mythology of the Plains. In some of them can be recognized versions of myths recorded elsewhere. The tale of the Spider and Coyote is similar to Bad Songs, in Riggs's "Dakota Grammar." In this work we find also the tale of the "Younger Brother." Yet there are differences in the following versions that justify their publication.

## I. SPIDER AND THE MONSTER.

One day, while Spider was walking through the country, he came to a wild potato vine and began to climb up the stalk. On his way up he met a great monster with a very large mouth. He was badly frightened, but he said in a pleasant voice: "Oh, my brother, I am looking for you."

The monster looked at him and said, "I have not had much to eat."

"Is that so?" said Spider, more frightened than ever.

"Yes, I have not had breakfast," said the monster.

"I have had breakfast," said Spider, "but it was a very small meal."

As the monster made some show of eating him Spider said: "My young brother, I am in a hurry. Why do you wish to eat me?"

The monster replied, "Since when am I your younger brother? When were you born?"

"When were you born?" said Spider.

"I was born," said the monster, "when the earth was made."

"Oh!" said Spider, "I made this earth and the sky and the sun and the moon and everything. You are one of the things I made. You were a little gray thing and I threw you away."

"Well," said the monster, "you are the older. What do you want with me?"

"There is a great camp not far from here," said Spider, "and I want to eat all of the people, but I am not big enough. So I wish you to eat half of them for me."

At this the monster began to lick his mouth, and said, "Where are they?"

"On the other side of this vine," said Spider. So they both ran around, Spider one way and the monster the other. When they came to the other side the monster drew a deep breath that almost swept

Spider down his throat. "Here," said Spider, "you breathe in some other direction."

When the monster turned in the other direction and looked down he saw a large camp of people. "Now," said Spider, "you wait here and I shall fix it so that each will have half of the people for his own. However, you must tell me what it is that you are afraid of."

"Well," said the monster, "I am afraid of a rattle, a whistle, a war-whoop, and the cloth of a menstruating woman."

"Well," said Spider, "I am afraid of the same things. Now you wait here until I return."

Spider ran very fast until he came to the camp where the people were. As soon as he reached them he said: "There will be a monster here to eat you, but I have fooled him. You are to get a rattle, a whistle, a war-whoop, and the cloth of a menstruating woman. Then go over with me to where the monster is hiding." So the people got all these things together and went out with Spider. When they were near the place, Spider said, "Now you wait here. I will bring the monster, and when he comes show him all these things."

Spider went up to the monster and said, "Now, come on. I have half of the people in one place and half in the other. I will show you which half you are to eat." As the monster was hungry and Spider kept telling him to hurry, he worked so hard that the perspiration streamed from his body. All at once a great crowd of people rose in their path with the war-whoop and the other objects they had brought. Spider ran away, but the monster was so exhausted with running and so frightened, when he saw the objects he feared, that he fell down and allowed himself to be killed.

## 2. SPIDER AND COYOTE.

One day Spider went out to walk. He came to a lake where many ducks were swimming in the water. "Now, how shall I get those ducks?" he said to himself. So he began to lay plans. He gathered together a great bundle of grass, placed it over his head, and waded out into the lake. As he was wading along, a large duck called out, "Spider, what are you doing with that grass?"

"I am in a hurry," said Spider; "those are some songs I must deliver to the people at once."

"Suppose you sing one of them for us," said the duck.

"No, I have no time," said Spider.

Now, as the duck insisted, Spider said, "Well, I will sing one if you will call all the ducks out here." When the ducks were brought together, Spider took one straw out of the bundle and sang. Then he directed the ducks to close their eyes and keep them closed. Then Spider began to sing, —

“Dance with your eyes shut,  
Dance with your eyes shut.”

While he was singing and the ducks were dancing, he began to kill them with a club. Now one of the ducks opened his eyes, and seeing what was going on, warned the others, at which they all flew away. The duck that looked had red eyes.

Spider picked up the ducks he had killed, put them on his back, and started on. At last he came to a large tree, sat down under the branches, and made a fire. He plucked the feathers from the ducks, and arranged them around the fire to roast. Some of them he covered up in the ashes. Soon the wind began to blow, and the branches of the tree, rubbing against each other, made a squeaky noise. “Now, what does the tree mean by that noise,” said Spider. “I shall make him quit.” Then Spider climbed into the tree. He saw that the squeaky noise resulted from one branch rubbing over another. “My brothers, you must not fight in that way,” said Spider. As they paid no attention to him he put his hand between them to part them. Then the branches came together and held his hand fast. “Oh, let me go! Let me go!” cried Spider.

Now while Spider’s hand was held between the branches, he looked around and saw Coyote coming along. He called out, “Coyote, I have some meat cooking here. You must not take it.”

When Coyote heard this, he said to himself, “I guess he has some meat all right.” Coyote snuffed about until he found the ducks roasting by the fire, then sat down and ate all of them. As he started away, Spider said aloud, “I hope Coyote did not find those ducks in the ashes.” When Coyote heard this he said, “I guess that is so; he did hide some in the ashes.” Then Coyote scratched away the ashes, ate the ducks, but stuck their feet back into the ashes as they were before.

A while after Coyote had gone, the wind died down and Spider got his hand loose. He was now very hungry. Rushing to the fire, he took hold of the legs sticking out of the ashes, but as the bodies of the ducks were not drawn out he said, “My, I have been up in the tree so long that these ducks are overdone. Their legs pull right off.” Then he began to dig in the ashes as fast as he could, but found nothing. “Coyote is a rascal,” he said. Then he started out in pursuit, and overtook him at the side of a hill. “Now, Coyote, I shall kill you,” he said, laying hold of him. He tied Coyote’s feet together, and carried him along on his back. After a time he sat down to rest, laid Coyote upon the ground, and began to build a fire. “Now, what shall I do with the skin,” said Spider. Now while Spider was building the fire, Coyote untied his feet, but lay as if asleep. “Well, I do not need the skin,” said Spider. “I shall throw him into the fire.” Just as he reached out to lay hold of Coyote, he sprang up and ran away. Then Spider stood by the fire and swore.

## 3. COYOTE AND THE BUFFALO.

Once Coyote was walking along. He had nothing to eat for a long time and was thin and weak. Finally he came to a deserted camp, but could find nothing save the remains of the fire. While he was looking around for food, he came upon a knife and an arrow. He carried them away with him, and when he came to the top of a high hill he saw many buffalo grazing in the valley below. He crept up close to the crest of the hill and looked over. Then he said to himself as he looked at the arrow and the knife, "Now those people kill buffalo with these things." So he took up the arrow and threw it toward the buffalo, saying, "Now, go and kill the buffalo. Go, hit that one."

The arrow fell down upon the ground and said, "You must take a piece of wood and a string before I can go and kill the buffalo."

Then Coyote went up to a tree, took the knife and cut off one of the branches, trimmed it and peeled off the bark. He twisted the bark into a cord and tied it to the stick. Then he went back, laid the bow on the ground, picked up the arrow, put it on the stick, and said, "Now, go."

The arrow said to him, "No, that is not the way. You must pull on the string."

Then Coyote put the arrow down, took hold of the string, and dragged the bow along the ground.

"No, no!" said the arrow, "that is not the way. You must hold me against the stick with one hand and hold the string with the other."

Coyote did so.

"Now," said the arrow, "pull with all your might and then let loose."

The arrow flew towards the buffalo, struck one of them in the side, but did not bring it down. Coyote picked up the knife and ran after the wounded buffalo as fast as he could. He shouted so loud that the wounded buffalo soon fell over from fright. Coyote stopped at once to lick up the blood from his wounds. Then he took up the knife and got ready to butcher the buffalo. Just then he looked up and saw a bear sitting on the other side.

"Come on," said Coyote, "I will give you some." But the bear did not move.

Coyote invited him again. Then he came over and helped Coyote to butcher. Now, Coyote was afraid of the bear and so kept on the other side of the buffalo from him. After a while the blood in Coyote's stomach began to roll. The bear heard the noise. He stopped and said, "What's that?"

Then Coyote struck his stomach, and said in a loud voice, "Keep quiet, my brother."

"What did your brother say?" said the bear.

"Well," said Coyote, "my brother just said that he eats bear."

The bear was puzzled by this, and started to go away.

“Where are you going?” said Coyote.

“Oh,” said the bear, “I am just going over the hill.”

As soon as the bear was out of sight, Coyote went up on the hill to look, and saw the bear running off as fast as he could. So he called out to the bear, “Come back, come back. I thought you were going to help me with my butchering.”

Then Coyote went back to the buffalo, and as there were many leaves upon the ground he covered the meat up with them. Then he went on with his butchering and a magpie flew by. Coyote threw a piece of fat to the bird, saying, “Eat this, and then fly all around the world and tell the people to come here (all the birds and animals). There will be a great feast.”

The magpie went out and flew all around the country, inviting all the animals to come to the feast. They soon arrived, and gathered around in a circle. Then Coyote sat down to have a talk with them. As soon as he sat down the night hawk began to fly around over his head and make a noise. “Oh, you get away, you jealous woman,” said Coyote. “I am going to talk now.” Then he tried to get up to begin his speech, but he could not rise. The night hawk had defecated around him, causing him to stick fast to his seat. Then all of the animals sprang up, ran to the carcass, and began to eat. Some of them soon found the meat hidden in the leaves, scratched it out, and ate it. Just as the meat was gone, Coyote got loose, but the animals ran away and left him. Then he sat down and cried.

After a time he started on his journey again and saw four buffalo. Now he had lost his knife and the arrow. The buffalo were in a hole among some tall grass. “Now, how can I get them,” said Coyote to himself. He went close up to them, and, when the buffalo looked at him, he said, “Brothers, turn me into a buffalo so that I can eat grass.”

“Well,” said a bull, “you stand over to one side and do not move.”

“Now,” said the buffalo, “get down and roll in the dust.”

When Coyote arose, the buffalo charged upon him, but Coyote was afraid and stepped to one side. The buffalo reproved him for this, and reminded him of the injunction to stand still. So they tried it again, but when the buffalo charged, Coyote stepped to one side as before. The buffalo reproved him, but said he would try again. The third time Coyote stepped aside as before. Now the buffalo was very angry, and he told Coyote he would try once more, and that, if he did not stand still, he would kill him. This time Coyote stood still when the buffalo charged. The buffalo tossed him up into the air and as he came down he became a buffalo. At once Coyote began to eat grass. He was very hungry. The buffalo started to go, but Coyote lingered behind eating grass. Finally, he refused to follow altogether, and the herd

left him. Coyote saw a wolf, and called out to him, "Here, brother, let me turn you into a buffalo." Then Coyote instructed the wolf to stand to one side and not to move. Then he told the wolf to roll in the dust as before. When Coyote charged upon the wolf, the latter stepped to one side. This he did three times, but the fourth time he stood still. Coyote said, "Now, I will make you eat grass." Then he tossed the wolf into the air, but he did not change. Coyote, himself, became a coyote again. Then the wolf began to fight him. Coyote was angry and said, "Now, you have spoiled all my fun, and I will punish you." So Coyote bit the wolf.

#### 4. TURTLE GOES TO WAR.

Once there was a great camp in which many animals and insects lived. Among others a turtle lived with his sister. One day he said to her, "Now, I shall go on the war-path. I shall pick out my party."

So he went out and invited a coal of fire, a grasshopper, some wasna,<sup>1</sup> a yellow butterfly, and a travois stick. The turtle called this strange party together and led them out to war. They soon came to the top of a hill as a whirlwind came by. The butterfly said, "Now I shall show you what I can do." So he spread out his wings to make a great flight. The whirlwind, however, began to carry him away and as he was whirled about he cried, "Stop, my brother! Stop, hey!" The whirlwind paid no attention and the butterfly was soon out of sight. Turtle and his party waited a long time, but as the butterfly did not return they went on their way. They soon came to a lot of rose-bushes that were thick and thorny. While Turtle was leading the way through the thicket, he heard some one call for help from the rear. They turned back and found the travois stick stuck fast in the bushes. They all took hold of it to pull it out. They pulled and pulled until the stick broke. "Now," they said, "the stick will die." So they all stood around it until it was dead. Then they went on their way.

Wasna was overheated and fell down dead before they had gone far. The others came to a large stream with a muddy edge. They held a council and decided that they must jump across. The fire and Turtle got across safely, but the grasshopper, who was too confident of his ability, just reached the edge of the stream and, falling into the mud, stuck fast. In trying to pull himself out he lost one of his legs. His cries brought Turtle and the fire back, but when they tried to pull him out he lost his other leg. "Now," said Turtle, "you cannot go with us. We must leave you."

Then Turtle and the fire went along and came to a large river. As the river was too wide to jump, Turtle decided to swim across and carry the fire on his back. When they were in the middle of the river the fire

<sup>1</sup> A kind of pemmican.

began to die, and called out to Turtle to hurry. Turtle swam as fast as he could, but when he reached the other shore the fire was dead. Now Turtle was the only one left of the war party.

As Turtle went along he saw a camp of Indians. He concealed himself at the edge of the creek, where the people came for water. In a short time, a little girl came down. Turtle arose from the water, caught her, and pulled her under. When she was drowned, he cut off her head and stuck it into his shell. Then he walked boldly toward the camp. As he was going along, he heard a man coming behind. The man called in a loud voice, "Here is a turtle!" Many men came out and took Turtle to the camp.

Then Turtle spoke to the men in his own language, saying, "I have come to look for an enemy." As the men did not understand this, they said, "Let us call the spider. He is clever and perhaps he can understand what that turtle says." When the spider came, Turtle said to him, "I have come to look for an enemy."

"Oh! he came to look for an enemy," said the spider to the men.

As soon as the men heard this, they began to make a large fire in the centre of the camp, and said that they were going to throw the turtle into it. When Turtle saw what they were going to do, he said to the spider, "Why, the fire is mine." Then he walked through the fire, which did not burn him much, and came back to the people. The people said, "Why, of course, the fire belongs to him." So they would not let him go into the fire again, because they thought he enjoyed going into it.

Then they consulted the spider as to how to kill the turtle, and the spider advised them to throw him into a deep hole filled with water.

When Turtle saw what they intended to do, he pretended to be very much afraid and began to lament his fate. He told the spider that he would surely die if thrown into the water. So, while Turtle was crying, he was picked up and thrown into the deep place. He sank down into the water, and when the bubbles arose to the surface the people said, "Now, he is dead." In a few moments Turtle arose in the centre of the water, gave a war-whoop, and waved in the air the head of the child he had killed. Then he dived. All the people cried out in rage, "Now, how shall we kill the turtle?" said they. The spider advised them to bring all of their horses, their pails, and their women and, dipping all the water out of the hole, give it to the horses to drink. They worked very fast. The water was not all out when the sun went down. The spider said, "Now, we must rest until morning. But for fear the turtle may escape we shall all sleep around the edge of the water."

While they were all lying there, some asleep and some watching, Turtle succeeded in passing them unnoticed.

Finally, he reached his own camp and related his adventures to the people. He told them that he had killed one of the enemy, and produced

the scalp as evidence. His sister held a victory dance over it. Dicebant omnes testudinem post bello revenientem cirro parvo in pene similem esse.

##### 5. PTÉ-HO-I-YÁ-PI.

Once in a camp of our people there was a young man who wished very much to marry a certain girl. She would not consent, however, unless he would bring her the Pté-ho-i-yá-pi.

“What is that?” said the young man.

“I do not know,” said the young woman, “but you must get it before I will marry you.”

So the young man went out through the camp and asked everybody he met what sort of a thing this was. No one seemed to know anything about it. Then he asked his father to call in all the old men and put the matter before them. They smoked many pipes, but could not make anything out of it. Then they called together all the old women, and began at one end of the circle, questioning each of them. At the end of the row was a very old woman, blind and deaf. So one of them put her hands to the old woman’s ears and said in a loud voice, “What kind of a thing is the Pté-ho-i-yá-pi?”

“What?” said the old woman. “What kind of a thing is the Pté-ho-i-yá-pi?” was repeated in a louder tone.

“Oh,” said the old woman, “that is something that is very hard to get. It is in the west. Far out in that direction you will find a camp in which lives a young woman who keeps this thing.”

Then the old women went home and the young man called for one of his friends to volunteer to go with him to look for the Pté-ho-i-yá-pi. This friend had a younger brother, who wished very much to go with them, but he was refused. When he insisted, his father told him that he was too young. However, as the young brother still insisted upon going, his mother said, “Well, let him go. I do not think any more of him than his older brother.”

So they started out, the younger brother taking a bow, some arrows, a point of a spear, two shells, some paint, etc. As they were going up a hill, they came upon some buffalo, and the younger brother shot one with an arrow. Then he stopped to take some sinew from its leg. The two young men were impatient and tried to hurry the younger brother, but he took his time to get the sinew. At last they reached the top of a hill, and looking beyond, saw many hills far, far away. Then the young men became discouraged and began to talk of giving up the search.

“Now, you see,” said the younger brother, “you could not get along without me.” Then he took out his sinew, thrust a stick through one end of it into the ground. He stretched the sinew tightly, and laid a coal of fire on its middle. Then the sinew snapped like a bow and the fire flew toward the distant hills. Then the party began their journey.

At last they came to a large river. On its shore they found an old tipi in which were four old women. Before coming to the tipi the boys found a dead eagle, and took the wings and the tail. The younger brother picked out four fine feathers, and when they came to the tipi he gave one to each of the four old women. The old women thanked him, and one of them said, "My son, your four grandfathers are lying up here in a row."

They went on and came to a sleeping bear. The young men said to the younger brother, "You jump on the bear's back and hold him." So the younger brother sprang upon the bear and held him by the neck. The bear sprang up on his hind feet and struck wildly in the air with his paws. The younger brother was frightened, and began to cry, but held on tightly until the bear quit struggling. Then the younger brother spoke to the bear, saying, "My grandfather, I will give you an eagle feather." And he tied the feather upon the head of the bear. "Now, I shall paint you," he said. Then he painted the hair of the bear. When this was done, the young men addressed the bear, and explained their object to him. The bear said, "I am the keeper of the thing you seek. I will use my power to aid you. Stop here on your return."

They continued their journey, and presently saw a buffalo asleep. Then the younger brother said to his companions, "One of you jump on him and hold him." The young man said to the older brother, "You do it." But the older brother said, "You do it." So they argued the matter. At last the younger brother sprang upon the buffalo and took him by the neck. The buffalo rose to his feet and plunged from one side to the other, but as the younger brother held him fast, he became quiet at last. Then the younger brother said to the buffalo, "I shall give you two shells." He tied them to the ears of the buffalo. He also tied an eagle feather to each of his horns and a beaver tail to his nose. Then the boys addressed the buffalo, explaining to him the object of their journey. The buffalo told them that he would use his power to aid them to secure this thing, and requested them to stop with him on their way back. They went on their way and came to a sleeping crane. The younger brother sprang upon him and held him fast. The bird struggled violently. Every time his wings moved, flashes came from them like lightning, and the noise they made was as loud as thunder. The younger brother began to cry, but held on tightly. At last the bird stood still. The younger brother took out his spear point and tied it to the end of the bird's bill. He took some blue paint and rubbed it over its feathers. Then he released the crane. The younger brother said to the bird, "We are looking for the Pté-ho-i-yá-pi."

"Well," said the crane, "I will use my power to aid you. Stop here as you go by."

Then they went on and came to a sleeping plover. The younger brother

sprang upon him and he began to struggle. Terrible red flashes came from his wings. The younger brother began to cry, but held on, and at last the bird was quiet. Then the boy took some red paint and painted a spot over each of the bird's eyes. He painted his neck yellow and black and put two eagle feathers in his tail. This is why the plover has two nice feathers in his tail. When this was done, the younger brother said to the bird, "We are looking for the Pté-ho-i-yá-pi."

"Well," said the plover, "I will give it to you. Just across this river is a large camp near the water. At the side of this camp where the bushes are very thick the Pté-ho-i-yá-pi comes every day. When you get it, stop here."

They soon came to the river, and found it very deep. "How shall we get across," said the brother. "I do not know," said the young man.

The younger said nothing, but taking an eagle plume, placed it upon the water, stood upon it, inviting his companions to do the same, and the wind carried them across. At the landing-place they saw many dogs. A woman came down for water, wearing a red dress. Her hair was red.

The younger brother said to his companions, "You hide in the bushes." Then he took a piece of dead twig, put it on his older brother, and at once he turned into a log of wood. Then he transformed the young man in the same manner. Then he himself became a log of wood, and lay in the middle of the path. Many dogs came down barking and sniffing, but passed by. Then the woman passed near the younger brother. She had a buffalo horn in the left hand and a stone hammer in her right hand. She looked at the logs of wood, and said to herself, "This log looks strange." So she put the buffalo horn down on the ground, and raised her hammer to strike it. The younger brother sprang up as a man, and took hold of her arm. The hammer she carried had great power. So he called to his companions for help. They at once assumed their former shapes and came to his assistance. By great effort they succeeded in killing the woman and they took her scalp. One of the young men took the buffalo horn and the other the hammer.

Just then the camp was aroused by an old woman who had seen what happened. The boys ran as quickly as they could to the edge of the river and floated across on the eagle plume as before.

There was a very powerful woman in the camp, who started out in pursuit of the young men. As she followed their trail, she came to the plover and scolded him, saying, "Well, you were the keeper of this thing." The plover flew up high and darted down into the dust making a great cloud which delayed the woman. After a time, however, she came to the crane and began to scold him. The crane also stirred up the dust, confusing the woman. Then she came to the buffalo and began to scold him, but he began to tear up the earth and bellow, scaring the woman

and forcing her to go far out of her way. She came to the bear and began to scold him. He also tore up the earth and forced her far out of her way.

At last the young men came to the tipi of the four old women and went in to rest. While they were there, the old woman who had pursued them came up, scolded the old women in the tipi, and said, "Send the boys out that I may kill them."

"Why not come in and kill them?" the old women answered.

"No," said the woman, "you must send them out."

Then the old women took up three buffalo robes, to which many scalps were tied, and gave one to each of the boys. Each boy put on a robe and pinned it with an eagle feather. Then the old women gave each of them a long knife. While they were doing this, the old woman who had pursued them called up many of her people.

When all was ready, the old women in the tipi called out to the crowd, "Now, you all get ready. We will send out the boys to you." Then the four women and the boys rushed out upon the crowd, killing many of them and driving the others away. After their victory they all returned to the old women's tipi. One of the old women said, "Take back with you some of my fire." They took two bunches of grass. "Now, when you get out of the tipi," said the old woman, "throw one of these." They went out and did so. The bunch of grass went up in a cloud of smoke, and the boys' people in their camp saw the smoke and knew that enemies had been killed.

Before starting home, the old women said to the young men: "The girls in your camp shall play the shinny game. This must be done. Before playing, the ball must be thrown up into the air, and when it comes down it must be knocked towards the south. All of you shall stand upon the south side singing a victory song and the song of the buffalo horn. When the ball is knocked towards the south, all the girls will run after the ball and the girl whom the brother wished to marry will be in the lead. As she approaches, you are to sing, 'This woman goes now.'"

Then the boys started home. When they came near the camp they threw up the second bunch of grass as a signal to the people to let them know that they had killed enemies. When they reached the camp they informed the people that the girls must play the shinny game. When they began to play, and the ball was knocked towards the south where the boys were standing singing the victory song and the song of the buffalo horn, the girl who had refused the brother ran in the lead. Then they sang, "This woman goes now." As they said this, she turned into a white tail deer and disappeared in the woods.

*Clark Wissler.*